

ELIZABETH H. LAWLER.

APRIL 24, 1884.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. MATSON, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 229.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 229) granting a pension to Elizabeth H. Lawler, having considered the evidence in the case, report:

That Elizabeth H. Lawler is the widow of Michael K. Lawler, who, at the commencement of the late civil war, was a farmer in Southern Illinois. On receipt of the news of the fall of Fort Sumter and the actual commencement of hostilities, he organized the Eighteenth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry, and was commissioned colonel, and on the 28th day of May, 1861, the regiment was mustered into the United States service for three years, and on the 25th of June the regiment was ordered to join the Army at Bird's Point, Missouri. January 9, 1862, his regiment accompanied General McClelland's command up the Tennessee River and held the advance in the operations against Fort Henry. February 15, 1862, his regiment participated in the battle of Fort Donelson, in which Colonel Lawler was severely wounded, and in which the regiment lost in killed and wounded 213 men.

April 25, 1862, he was commissioned brigadier-general and ordered to report to Major-General McClelland, commanding Thirteenth Army Corps. May 2 he reported for duty at Port Gibson, Miss., and was placed in command of the Second Brigade, Fourth Division.

The conduct of General Lawler at the battle of Champion Hills is shown by the following extract from the report of Major-General McClelland:

All of Lawler's brigade of the same division, except a reserve of one regiment, also advanced to support Lindsay, who had pushed a charge near the mouth of the battery. Lawler's brigade here cast the trembling balance in our favor, himself narrowly escaping the effect of a shell. His men joined Lindsay, and both dashed forward, shooting down the enemy's artillery horses, driving away the gunners, and capturing two pieces of cannon.

General Grant, in his report of the battle of Big Black River, pays the following tribute to General Lawler:

At daylight on the 17th the pursuit was renewed, with McClelland's corps in the advance. The enemy was found strongly posted on both sides of the Black River. At this point on the river the bluffs extend to the water's edge on the west bank; on the east side is an open, cultivated bottom, of near one mile in width, surrounded by a bayou of stagnant water from 2 to 3 feet in depth, and from 10 to 02 feet in width. From the river above the railroad to the river below, following the inside line of the

bayou, the enemy had constructed rifle pits, with the bayou to serve as a ditch, on the outside and immediately in front of them. Carr's division occupied the right in investing the place, and Lawler's brigade the right of his division. After a few hours' skirmishing, Lawler discovered that by moving a portion of his brigade, under cover of the river bank, he could get a position from which that place could be successfully assaulted, and ordered a charge accordingly. Notwithstanding the level ground over which the troops had to pass without cover, and the great obstacle of the ditch in front of the enemy's works, the charge was gallantly and successfully made, and in a few minutes the entire garrison, with 17 pieces of artillery, were the trophies of this brilliant and daring movement.

The enemy's works were carried in four minutes from the time the movement commenced, but at the cost of 184 men in killed and wounded of the brigade commanded by General Lawler. As a result of this movement, 63 officers, 1,880 of the enemy were captured, including 17 pieces of artillery, 4 stands of colors, and 1,400 muskets.

At the assault on the rebel works at Vicksburg, May 22, 1862, General Lawler's conduct is thus referred to by Major-General McClelland:

Five minutes before 10 o'clock the bugle sounded the charge, and at 10 o'clock my column of attack moved forward, and in fifteen minutes Lawler's and Landrum's brigades had carried the ditch, slope, and bastions of the fort. * * * Men never fought more gallantly, nay, more desperately; for more than eight long hours they maintained their ground with death-like tenacity. Neither the blazing sun nor deadly fire of the enemy shook them. Their valor filled me with admiration. The spectacle was one never to be forgotten.

In this charge General Lawler's brigade lost, in killed and wounded, 375 men.

It appears from the records of the Adjutant-General's Office that Michael K. Lawler was appointed a brigadier-general of volunteers November 29, 1862, and commanded the Second Brigade, Second Division, reserve, Army of the Tennessee and the post of Jackson, Tenn., to March 10, 1863; on leave to March 30, 1863; commanding district of Corinth, Tenn., to April 25, 1863; commanding Second Brigade, Fourteenth Division, Thirteenth Army Corps, from May 2 to July 18, 1863; on sick leave to August 15, 1863; commanding Fourth Division, Thirteenth Corps, to September 21, 1863; the Third Brigade, First Division, Thirteenth Corps, to October 23, 1863, and the First Division, Thirteenth Corps, to December 14, 1863; on sick leave to February 15, 1864; commanding Third Brigade, Tenth Division, Thirteenth Corps, to March 10, 1864; the Second Brigade, First Division, Thirteenth Corps, to April 30, 1864; the detachment Thirteenth Corps, to July, 1864; the Third Division, Nineteenth Corps, to November 22, 1864; detachment Nineteenth Corps, to January, 1865, and the First Brigade, Reserve Corps, Military Division of Mississippi, to February 3, 1865; on twenty days' leave; commanding ninth district of Baton Rouge from March 20 to August 11, 1865, and awaiting orders to January 15, 1866, when he was honorably mustered out of service.

William H. White, surgeon Twenty-second Iowa Infantry, certifies July 4, 1863:

I have carefully examined Brigadier-General Lawler, Second Brigade, Fourteenth Division, Thirteenth Army Corps, and find that he has hepatitis, with diarrhea, and in consequence of which he is, in my opinion, unfit for duty and will not be in a less time than twenty days, and that an immediate change of climate is necessary to prevent permanent disability.

December 15, 1863, B. B. Brashear, surgeon in charge First Division, Thirteenth Army Corps, certifies to his disability from fever, and that it is necessary for him to return home in order to receive the care and treatment required by his advanced years to restore him to health.

January 31, 1864, P. Campbell, of Equality, Ill., certifies:

Brigadier-General M. K. Lawler, United States Volunteers, having applied for a certificate on which to ground an application for extension of his leave of absence, I do hereby certify that I have carefully examined this officer and find him suffering under severe tonsillitis, in connection with bronchial inflammation, and is therefore unfit for duty.

January 16, 1866, he was placed on the pension roll at the rate of \$7.50 per month for wound of right arm and injury to head, received at the battle of Fort Donelson, which was increased to \$15 per month April 9, 1877.

General Lawler died July 26, 1882, of "disease contracted in the military service of the United States."

General Lawler was also a distinguished soldier in the Mexican war in 1846-'47, as a member of the Third Regiment Illinois Volunteers; he participated in the siege of Vera Cruz and the battle of Cerro Gordo. His term of service having expired he organized a company of cavalry, of which he was commissioned captain, but the war having been brought to a successful termination his service was not required, and he returned to his home in Southern Illinois.

His services in the late war are thus referred to by the Vicksburg correspondent of the New York Herald during the operations of General Grant's Army in front of Vicksburg:

GENERAL LAWLER, THE GARIBALDI OF THE WEST.

[Vicksburg correspondence New York Herald.]

Among the celebrated and prominent officers of General Grant's army is Brigadier-General Lawler, or, as he is known among his troops, "The Check Shirt General," and by others as the "Garibaldi of the West." General Lawler is from Illinois, where he owns an extensive farm, from which, by his industry as an agriculturist, he has attained a position of opulence. When the rebellion broke out he was at work in the field, and musing on the matter, while following his plow, he determined to give his personal services to the Government. He raised a regiment of troops, and subsequently was elevated for meritorious service to his present rank. General Lawler is a fair representative of the western farmer. He is nearly six feet in height, built in proportion, weighs over 200 pounds, and is about fifty years of age. In his military position he eschews all ostentation. In the field and camp he wears an ordinary suit of blue flannel, his trousers tucked into his boots, and a white felt hat. He wears no insignia indicative of rank except a gold cord on his hat. As a soldier he stands well, is a happy conversationalist and humorist, and as a disciplinarian is strict. He has served in all the battles on the Mississippi.

That General Lawler enjoyed the confidence of General Grant and General McClelland is fully demonstrated by the liberal quotations made from their congratulatory orders, given elsewhere.

As an Irish-American citizen he contributed his services to his adopted country on every occasion, whether that country was assailed by a foreign or domestic enemy, and as a pioneer citizen of Illinois he early formed the acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln, and this friendship continued to the time of Mr. Lincoln's death.

When General Lawler returned home from his service in the late war, he was in comfortable circumstances financially, but his broken health, acquired in the service of his country, was such as to be a constant demand upon his resources for medical treatment up to the time of his death, and when his estate came to be settled, it was found that it was exhausted, and his widow left entirely without any means of support. She is now over seventy years of age, and your committee are of the opinion that the Government this soldier served so faithfully in two wars cannot afford to see his widow in her old days living off the charity of neighbors, or closing her eyes in death in an almshouse, and therefore recommend that the bill be amended by striking out the words "one hundred" in line 7, and inserting the word "fifty"; and when so amended, that the bill do pass.

